



AMHERST COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING



MINUTES

July 15, 2021

Administrative Office Complex
153 Washington Street
Public Meeting Room
Meeting Convened - 7:00 PM

1. Call to Order

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Bryant (Vice Chair), Jim Thompson, Catherine Gamble, Beverly Jones, Derin Foor, Andrew Proctor (EDA Liaison-Non Voting)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Martineau (Chair), David Pugh (Board of Supervisors Liaison-Non Voting)

STAFF PRESENT: Tyler Creasy (Assistant Zoning Administrator), Stacey Stinnett (Administrative Assistant)

STAFF ABSENT: Jeremy Bryant (Director of Community Development)

Chairman Bryant called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm

2. Election of Officers

A. Election of Officers

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to nominate Michael Bryant as Chairman.

Motion made by: Foor

Second: Thompson

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to nominate Catherine Gamble as Vice Chair.

Motion made by: Thompson

Second: Jones
Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to nominate Jeremy Bryant as Secretary.
Motion made by: Gamble
Second: Foor
Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the agenda as submitted.
Motion made by: Gamble
Second: Thompson
Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

4. Citizens Comments

There were none.

5. Public Hearing - Special Exception

A. 20121-344 SolAmerica Energy

Request by SolAmerica Energy, LLC for a modification to an existing special exception request. In 2020, SolAmerica Energy, LLC was granted approved by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors for a special exception request (2020-478) for a utility-scale solar generation facility. That approval included that each solar panel was on a single-axis tracker system that rotated with the sun. The applicant would like to revise the original special exception approval to allow the solar panels to be a fixed tilt design. The property is located near Union Hill Road and is further identified as tax map number 111-3-1, 2.

Mr. Creasy gave the staff report and concluded his comments by stating that staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Site Plan: The use shall be in general conformance with the approved site plan.
2. Lighting: If exterior lighting is provided, all proposed lighting shall be glare-shielded and directed so as to prevent illumination across the property line.
3. Outdoor storage: No miscellaneous items shall be stored outside other than the solar panels and ancillary equipment that is part of the approved use.
4. Entrances: The applicant will be responsible to obtain all necessary permits from the Virginia Department of Transportation.
5. Use: The use of the parcel shall be in conformance with the advertised use as part of the special exception.

6. Landscaping: The site shall maintain all existing trees and proposed trees as shown on the existing site plan.

Chairman Bryant opened the public hearing.

Mr. Ryan Peters, representative with Sol America, spoke in favor of the request and answered the Planning Commissions questions.

Mr. David Tyree, resides at 271 Buffalo Ridge Road in Amherst, spoke in opposition to the request. His concerns were that the glare would be directed to his house since he was an adjoining property owner.

There being no further comments, Chairman Bryant closed the public hearing.

The Planning Commission had a brief discussion regarding a vegetation buffer.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the request for Sol America case# 2021-344 with staff recommendations and including the conditions that states: Buffer: A vegetative buffer shall be required for any portions of the parcel in which the current or proposed buffer does not adequately shield neighboring properties from the proposed development.

Motion made by: Thompson

Second: Foor

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

6. Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Creasy stated that he has not yet received the updated Census Data information that is to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Once he receives that information then he will give an updated schedule.

7. Old/New Business

Mrs. Gamble expressed concern for safety that VDOT needed to be contacted by staff about the sidewalk at the Madison Heights Dollar General for the steep grade and no railing.

Mr. Creasy updated that Planning Commission on the Cook Out Drive Thru and the Monacan Indian Nation (Health Facility) site plans.

Mr. Procor, EDA liaison, updated the Planning Commission on a discussion that Terry Morcom, Owner/Contractor for Morcom Building Inc., had with the EDA regarding an interest he had in the Old Town Madison Heights area. He owns 26 acres near Cunningham Properties. Mr. Morcom would like to see access improvement for public septic and water. Mr. Proctor

stated that the EDA agreed and that he was writing a letter to the Board of Supervisors from the EDA, requesting that this area and project needed to be included in the Madison Heights Strategic Plan.

Mr. Creasy stated that the Scottish Inn had been demolished and that the Howard Johnson's still expressed interest in this location.

Mr. Creasy also updated the Planning Commission on the Northvail and Royal Gardens area in Madison Heights being included in the future land use map zoned as multi residential use.

8. Youth Representative

A. Youth Representative

Mr. Creasy informed the Planning Commission that the Amherst County High School Principal Derrick Brown had recommended two students for the Planning Commission.

Mrs. Gamble stated that she wanted to see the Committees and Boards of Amherst County more involved with participation from the youth. Mrs. Gamble stated that our youth was the County's future and that everyone should be given a fair chance at the opportunity. Mrs. Gamble felt that the youth needed to be educated on what the Boards and Committees of Amherst County were and how they impacted the County.

Mrs. Gamble asked staff if all other County Boards and Committees Charters included Youth Participation and was it part of their charter. Mr. Creasy's reply was that not all Boards have youth participants and he was only aware of the Planning Commission including it in the charter.

Mrs. Gamble stated that she believes there should be a consensus that all charters be consistent.

The Planning Commission discussed interviewing the potential students.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to direct staff to contact youth participants for interviews with the Planning Commission.

Motion made by: Jones

Second: Foor

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

9. Approval of Minutes for June 17, 2021

A. Minutes

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the June 17, 2021 meeting minutes.

Motion made by: Foor

Second: Gamble

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

10. Adjournment

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to adjourn.

Motion made by: Foor

Second: Gamble

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.